

Turkey

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

An estimated 4.2 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were counted as working in Turkey in 1999. Approximately 4.6 percent of all boys 5 to 14 were working compared to 3.7 percent of girls in the same age group. The majority of working children were found in the agricultural sector (66.7 percent), followed by services (18 percent), manufacturing (13.4 percent), and other sectors (2 percent).⁴⁷¹⁴ Children are engaged in metal work, woodworking, textiles and leather goods production, domestic service,⁴⁷¹⁵ automobile repair, furniture making, hotel and catering work, and footwear production.⁴⁷¹⁶ Currently, the government has identified the worst forms of child labor as street work, work in hazardous industries or the urban informal economy, and seasonal agricultural labor.⁴⁷¹⁷ A rapid assessment on working street children in 2001 found that street children in the cities of Diyarbakir, Adana, and Istanbul pick through garbage at dumpsites, shine shoes, and sell various goods, among other activities.⁴⁷¹⁸ Child labor is one of many problems associated with poverty. In 2000, less than 2 percent of the population in Turkey were living on less than USD 1 a day.⁴⁷¹⁹

Girls are trafficked to Turkey from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation.⁴⁷²⁰ Turkey is also used as a transit point for children trafficked to Western Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, the former Yugoslavia, and Africa for sexual exploitation and forced labor.⁴⁷²¹

Under the Compulsory Basic Education Act, primary education is obligatory for a period of 8 years. A typical child's basic education is concluded by age 13 or 14.⁴⁷²² In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate

⁴⁷¹⁴ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, October 7, 2005. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the section in the front of the report titled "Data Sources and Definitions."

⁴⁷¹⁵ This data is based on a 1994 joint Ministry of Labor and Social Security-IPEC survey as well as a second joint IPEC-Turkish Development Foundation survey. See Government of Turkey and UNICEF, *The Situation of Children and Women in Turkey: An Executive Summary*, [online] 1998 [cited March 18, 2004], Section E: Child Labor; available from <http://www.die.gov.tr/CIN/Sa98.pdf>. See also Ministry of Labor and Social Security Labor Inspection Board, *Report on the Implementation of Labor Inspection Policy on Child Labor in Turkey*, Ankara, June 2000, 3, 26.

⁴⁷¹⁶ Government of Turkey and UNICEF, *Situation of Children and Women*, Section E: Child Labor. See also Ministry of Labor and Social Security Labor Inspection Board, *Report on the Implementation of Labor Inspection Policy*, 26.

⁴⁷¹⁷ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey - Supporting the Timebound Program for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey (2004-2006)*, project document, TUR/03/P50/USA, Geneva, 2003, 4. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004: Turkey*, Washington, D.C., February 28, 2005, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41713.htm>.

⁴⁷¹⁸ Bahattin Aksit, Nuray Karanci, and Ayse Gunduz-Hosgor, *Turkey Working Street Children in Three Metropolitan Cities: A Rapid Assessment*, ILO, Geneva, November 2001, 41-42; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipeoc/simpoc/turkey/ra/street.pdf>.

⁴⁷¹⁹ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2005* [CD-ROM], Washington, DC, 2005.

⁴⁷²⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Turkey*, June 2005, 214-5; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/47255.pdf>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 5.

⁴⁷²¹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons-2005*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 5.

⁴⁷²² Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labor in Turkey*, Washington, D.C., November 9, 2001, 5. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 5.

was 91 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 86 percent.⁴⁷²³ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. In 1999, 88.1 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were attending school.⁴⁷²⁴

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Law establishes the minimum age for employment at 15 years. The law, however, allows children 14 years of age to perform light work that does not interfere with their education, and enables governors in provinces dependent on agriculture to determine the minimum age for work in that sector. Before beginning a heavy and dangerous job, children ages 15 to 18 years of age must undergo a physical examination, which is to be repeated every 6 months.⁴⁷²⁵ Children under 16 are permitted to work no more than 8 hours per day.⁴⁷²⁶ While attending school, children are prohibited from working more than 2 hours per day or 10 hours per week. The Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Act No. 3308 allows children ages 14 to 18 who have completed the mandatory 8 years of education to be employed as apprentices. Apprenticeship programs provide a wide range of occupational training at 346 training centers in 81 cities and in 113 occupations.⁴⁷²⁷ Ministry of National Education Training Centers are required by law to inspect these apprenticeship workplaces and ensure adequate working conditions.⁴⁷²⁸

According to the Constitution, no person is required to perform work unsuitable for their age or capabilities.⁴⁷²⁹

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Turkey. The minimum age for recruitment into the armed forces is 19 years.⁴⁷³⁰ Criminal law prohibits prostitution under the age of 21⁴⁷³¹ and the sexual exploitation of children.⁴⁷³² A new Penal Code, which became effective June 1, 2005, forbids the use of children in pornographic materials. This is punishable by imprisonment for 5 to 10 years.⁴⁷³³ The Penal Code also designates the trafficking of persons as a crime. Those convicted face 8 to 12 years in prison and, at the judge's discretion, an additional 10,000 days of incarceration.⁴⁷³⁴ The Code calls for a fine not less than 1 billion Turkish Lira (USD 737).⁴⁷³⁵ Since 1999, the Government of Turkey submitted to the ILO a list or an equivalent document identifying the types of work that it has determined

⁴⁷²³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportID=51> (Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios, Primary; accessed October 2005).

⁴⁷²⁴ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

⁴⁷²⁵ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *reporting*, August 22, 2003.

⁴⁷²⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 6d.

⁴⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷²⁹ *Constitution of the Republic of Turkey*, Article 50; available from <http://www.hri.org/docs/turkey/>.

⁴⁷³⁰ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report- Turkey*, 2004; available from http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=933.

⁴⁷³¹ Interpol, *Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offenses Against Children- Turkey*, September 26, 2005; available from <http://www.interpol.int/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaTurkey.asp>.

⁴⁷³² U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *reporting*, August 22, 2003.

⁴⁷³³ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey - Supporting the Timebound Program for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey (2004-2006)*, technical progress report, TUR/03/P50/USA, Geneva, March 2005, 2. See also Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Turkey, *Turkey on Trafficking in Human Beings*, June 27, 2005; available from <http://www.mfa.tr/MFA/ForeignPolicy/MainIssues/TurkeyOnTraffickingInHumanBeings/TurkeyonTraffickinginHumanBeings.htm>.

⁴⁷³⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 5. See also Republic of Turkey, *Turkey on Trafficking in Human Beings*.

⁴⁷³⁵ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *reporting*, August 22, 2003. See also OANDA.com, *FX Converter*, [cited November 21, 2005]; available from <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>.

are harmful to the health, safety or morals of children under Convention 182 or Convention 138.⁴⁷³⁶ The Ministry of Labor Social Security (MOLSS) also published a list of permitted occupations for children 15 to 18 years of age.⁴⁷³⁷ Children 15 to 18 years are not permitted to work in bars, coffee houses, dance halls, cabarets, casinos, or public baths, or to engage in industrial night work. The law prohibits underground and underwater work for women of any age and for boys under the age of 18.⁴⁷³⁸

The MOLSS Labor Inspection Board is responsible for enforcing child labor laws in Turkey.⁴⁷³⁹ According to the Board, the MOLSS has been unable to effectively prevent child labor for a variety of reasons, including traditional attitudes, socio-economic factors, and the predominantly informal nature of child labor in Turkey. According to the U.S. Department of State, the work in which many children engage is not covered by labor laws, such as work in agricultural sites/workplaces with fewer than 50 workers, maritime and air transport, family businesses, small shops, and the informal economy, and therefore cannot be regulated by the inspectorate.⁴⁷⁴⁰ Therefore, the Board has focused on protecting working children by improving their working conditions.⁴⁷⁴¹ Enforcement of labor laws is easier in medium and large-sized businesses.⁴⁷⁴² Approximately 100 field inspectors have been trained to handle child labor issues.⁴⁷⁴³ The MOLSS's Child Labor Unit (CLU) is active in combating the worst forms of child labor in Turkey. In 2005, the government increased the resources given to the CLU and staff levels increased from 3 to 12 persons.⁴⁷⁴⁴

A Parliamentary Commission on Child Labor Working on the Streets was formed to investigate instances of child labor and to propose intervention programs. The commission is composed of the Ministers of Justice, Interior, Health, Education, and the State Minister responsible for Family and Women Affairs. A parallel committee was formed within the Grand Turkish National Assembly.⁴⁷⁴⁵ The Interior Ministry's Child Police are specifically responsible for protecting children, including protecting working children from employer abuses.⁴⁷⁴⁶ Under the Law on Social Services and Child Protection Institution, No. 2828, children who are subjected to the worst forms of child labor are placed under the protection of the state. Care and rehabilitation is provided for those children at 30 centers around the country.⁴⁷⁴⁷

The Task Force on Human Trafficking coordinates government action on trafficking and includes members from the Ministries of Health, Interior, Justice, and Labor, as well as the Directorate General for Social Services and Child Protection, the Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women, and academics from Marmara University. The Task Force is headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁷⁴⁸

In 2004, the government identified 239 persons who were trafficked. Between January 2004 and March 2005, 103 were voluntarily repatriated to their home countries. Between November 2004 and February

⁴⁷³⁶ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *reporting*, August 26, 2004. See also ILO-IPEC official, email communication to USDOL official, November 14, 2005.

⁴⁷³⁷ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *reporting*, August 26, 2004.

⁴⁷³⁸ See Article 176 of the 1930 General Health Care Act 1593 and Articles 68, 69, 78 of the Labor Act 1475 as cited in Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations and ILO Ankara, *Child Labor in Turkey*, ILO Publications Bureau, Geneva, 1997, 31.

⁴⁷³⁹ Ministry of Labor and Social Security Labor Inspection Board, *Report on the Implementation of Labor Inspection Policy*, 5-6. See also Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labor*.

⁴⁷⁴⁰ Ministry of Labor and Social Security Labor Inspection Board, *Report on the Implementation of Labor Inspection Policy*, 3-5. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 6d.

⁴⁷⁴¹ Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labor*, 3-7. See also Embassy of Turkey, *Policies, Programs, and Measures Against Child Labor in Turkey*, Washington, D.C., September 6, 2002, 10, 11, 14.

⁴⁷⁴² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 6d.

⁴⁷⁴³ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *reporting*, September 1, 2005.

⁴⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁴⁵ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2004 - 2006), Technical Progress Report, March 2005*, 2, 3.

⁴⁷⁴⁶ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2004 - 2006), Project Document*, 50.

⁴⁷⁴⁷ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *reporting, September 1, 2005*.

⁴⁷⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 5.

2005, 46 trafficked persons were provided shelter assistance in Istanbul.⁴⁷⁴⁹ In 2004, the government initiated prosecutions of 142 suspected traffickers.⁴⁷⁵⁰ According to the U.S. State Department, reports indicate that police corruption hampers efforts to fight trafficking and contributes to the problem.⁴⁷⁵¹

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In working towards meeting EU accession conditions, priorities for the Government of Turkey include fulfilling obligations to eliminate child labor.⁴⁷⁵² The Government of Turkey has developed a National Timebound Policy and Program Framework designed to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and the involvement of children below the age of 15 in all forms of work between 2004 and 2014.⁴⁷⁵³ A chapter on child labor is also included in the Eighth 5-Year Development Plan of Turkey (2000-2005). The child labor policy directives include eliminating the causes forcing children to work and the constraints that prevent children from attending school, and harmonizing national legislation with international conventions. This plan commits the government to respond to child labor issues by promoting policies to increase family income, provide social welfare, and reduce education costs for the poor.⁴⁷⁵⁴

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	10/30/98	✓
Ratified Convention 182	8/2/01	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		✓
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		✓
Sector Action Plan		

The Government of Turkey has committed to making a significant contribution (USD 6.2 million) to support the USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC project, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey - Supporting the Timebound Program for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey, 2004-2006*. The program includes activities in 11 provinces based on the prevalence of child work in priority sectors of street work, informal economy, and seasonal agricultural labor.⁴⁷⁵⁵ The government is also participating in the USDOL-funded USD 6 million project *Combating Exploitative Child Labor through Education in Turkey, 2004-2008*.⁴⁷⁵⁶ The project is focused on assisting children working under hazardous conditions in seasonal agriculture in the provinces of Gaziantep, Anliurfa, Mardin, Elazig, Agri, and Ankara.⁴⁷⁵⁷ Various other regional child labor elimination programs are underway throughout the country, supported by the national or local level authorities. The government operates 28 centers to aid working street children.⁴⁷⁵⁸

The Government of Turkey is taking steps to combat trafficking of persons.⁴⁷⁵⁹ The Ministry of Health provides free medical treatment for children who have been trafficked.⁴⁷⁶⁰ The government sponsors anti-

⁴⁷⁴⁹ The ages of trafficked persons are not known. See Republic of Turkey, *Turkey on Trafficking in Human Beings*.

⁴⁷⁵⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons-2005*.

⁴⁷⁵¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 5.

⁴⁷⁵² Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Executive Summary of the Turkish National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis*, 2003.

⁴⁷⁵³ ILO-IPEC, *Summary Outline for Action Programme on Child Labour (2004-2006)*, TUR/03/P50/USA, July 27, 2004, 2, 3. See also Ministry of Labor and Social Security Child Labor Unit, *Timebound Policy and Programme Framework for the Elimination of Child Labor Turkey (Draft)*, 2003, 47.

⁴⁷⁵⁴ ILO-IPEC, *International Program for Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) Turkey*, [online] January 21, 2004 [cited March 18, 2004], 1-2; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/eurpro/ankara/programme/ipecc.htm>. See also Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labor*, 5-7. See also U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *reporting, August 26, 2004*.

⁴⁷⁵⁵ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2004 - 2006)*, *Project Document*, cover, 2.

⁴⁷⁵⁶ IMPAQ International, *Combating Exploitative Child Labor through Education in Turkey*, *project document*, May 17, 2005, cover.

⁴⁷⁵⁷ IMPAQ International, *Combating Exploitative Child Labor through Education in Turkey*, *project revision*, September 19, 2005.

⁴⁷⁵⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 6d.

⁴⁷⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons-2005*.

trafficking training programs and a hotline. Anti-trafficking brochures were printed and distributed by law enforcement officers.⁴⁷⁶¹

The World Bank provided a loan to support the second Basic Education Project. The Government of Turkey's goals for its Basic Education Program are for all eligible children to enroll in and complete basic education, for pre-school enrollment of eligible children to reach 25 percent, to improve student performance, and for 40 percent of children in basic education to be utilizing information and communication technologies. It has improved education through a number of measures, including the construction of new classrooms, provision of education materials, and teacher training. The project will conclude in 2006.⁴⁷⁶² The World Bank also funds the Social Risk Mitigation Project. It finances the expansion of education and health grants for the poorest six percent of families to prevent dropouts among at-risk youth.⁴⁷⁶³ On March 15, 2005, the World Bank approved a USD 96.1 million loan to fund a Secondary Education Project aimed at supporting the government's goals to increase the compulsory education period from 8 to 12 years and increase the enrollment rates of basic education graduates in secondary education programs.⁴⁷⁶⁴ The Ministry of National Education and UNICEF support the Advocacy Campaign for Girls' Education which aims to place every girl in school by the end of 2005. The program was launched in 10 provinces and will expand to an additional 40.⁴⁷⁶⁵

⁴⁷⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Turkey*, Section 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *reporting*, August 26, 2004.

⁴⁷⁶¹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons-2005*.

⁴⁷⁶² World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of US\$300 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Second Basic Education Project in Support of the Second Phase of the Basic Education Program*, June 12, 2002 [cited June 27, 2005], 3-7; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/07/09/000094946_0206260400300/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf. See also World Bank, *Basic Education Project (02)*, June 27, 2005 [cited June 27, 2005]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P059872>.

⁴⁷⁶³ World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Investment/Adjustment Loan in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Social Risk Mitigation Project/Loan*, August 17, 2001 [cited June 27, 2005], 2; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/10/18/000094946_01082504044864/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf. See also World Bank, *Social Risk Mitigation Project*, June 27, 2005 [cited June 27, 2005]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P074408>.

⁴⁷⁶⁴ World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of Euro 80.00 Million to the Republic of Turkey for Secondary Education Project*, February 16, 2005, 3; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/02/25/000090341_20050225092434/Rendered/PDF/27983.pdf. See also World Bank, *Secondary Education*, June 12, 2002 [cited June 27, 2005]; available from <http://www.worldbank.org.tr/external/default/main?pagePK=64027221&piPK=64027220&theSitePK=361712&menuPK=361744&Projectid=P066149>.

⁴⁷⁶⁵ UNICEF, *One in Every Eight Girls Out of School in Turkey*, [online press release] July 19 2003 [cited June 27, 2005]; available from http://www.unicef.org/media/media_10946.html. See also UNICEF, *At a Glance: Turkey*, [cited June 27, 2005]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/Turkey.html>.